

in his acceptance of their accuracy. Without indication of supporting evidence, Penkower frequently states as fact rather than opinion claims made by participants whose objectivity seems questionable. In some instances these claims appear so exaggerated as to arouse suspicion immediately, as when he asserts: "Faced with a lax and inefficient director, as well as boondoggling and cynical ex-newspapermen, Rebecca Pitts wrote nearly all the essays for the Indiana Guide" (p. 91). Penkower's sole source for this information is Rebecca Pitts. To be sure, Pitts contributed significantly to the Indiana Guide; but as the Indiana files clearly indicate, the completed volume was the collective work of many talented individuals, only a small number of whom were listed in the preface.

Penkower provides an excellent bibliography and index, but his shortcut approach to footnoting is injudicious. Rather than number and treat each citation separately, Penkower groups all references in a paragraph into one footnote. Such a practice is acceptable only when it is clear to which source a statement or quotation refers. This is not always the case in Penkower's text.

The few flaws in this work do not detract significantly from its overall excellence. Penkower has produced a well-written, carefully documented, and comprehensive account of the Federal Writers' Project. It is the finest general work yet to appear on the subject.

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*Experiment in Liberty: The Ideal of Freedom in the Experience of the Disciples of Christ.* By Ronald E. Osborn. (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1978. Pp. 144. Notes, index. \$5.95.)

Three Forrest F. Reed Lectures for 1976 constitute a lively historical digest of Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) data reflecting the American religious experience. Ronald E. Osborn, at one time on the faculty of Butler University School of Religion (now Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis), considers religious liberty both as the Disciples of Christ's contribution to as well as its identifying characteristic in American history.

According to Osborn, the American frontier experience liberated the Calvinist theologians from the old doctrine of strict predestination and Presbyterian stewardship. His first essay thus reflects the coincidental development of the Disciples of Christ at the time of the Revolution when royal absolutism was

also being displaced by the democratic republic. Besides citing Thomas Campbell and Walter Scott, Osborn gives a credible illustration to his thesis in the fields of politics and art by referring to such individuals as Lyndon Baines Johnson and Vachal Lindsay. Without consigning the Disciples of Christ to nineteenth century Romanticism, Osborn deals in his second essay with the liberating efforts of the church in evangelical preaching and education. The education of preachers shows the true freedom that the church sought in academia as well as in the effort to educate the congregations religiously from the pulpit. The final section brilliantly analyzes the Disciples of Christ as a contemporary movement. The old anticlericalism, anticreedalism, and anti-ecclesiasticism is put in thematic perspective. Osborn concludes that when, in the broader ecumenical movement, the One Church emerges the Disciples of Christ will be seen as principal proponents of the freedom of the children of God.

Unlike run-of-the-mill bicentennial productions, *Experiment in Liberty* is unaffected and unpretentious. Its comprehensive reflection on broad historical sources makes it a valuable contribution to American religious thought in general and (because of Butler University's history) to Indiana history in particular. It is well documented.

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